



THE PHYSICIAN'S *Bookshelf*

WILLIAM HARVEY—His Life and Times: His Discoveries: His Methods—Louis Chauvois. Philosophical Library, New York, 1957. 271 pages, \$7.50.

In this year of Harvey celebration it is of interest to find a new book on the discoverer of the circulation by a Frenchman—and a very fine book it is! Chauvois realizes that medical history can only be written intelligently against the historical background of the time, and the first part of the book is really a sketch of the Jacobean, Commonwealth and Restoration periods interwoven with the life of Harvey vividly depicted. An account of the details of Harvey's discoveries occupies the later part of the work. The author is obviously a great admirer of his subject and one wonders at times whether he does not ascribe to Harvey's character a degree of perfection perhaps a little overdone. Aubrey, who is superficial and gossipy but nonetheless fairly reliable, says of him for example: "He understood Greek and Latin pretty well, but was no Critique, and he wrote very bad Latin. The Circuits Sanguinis was, as I take it, done into Latin by Sir George Ent . . . All his profession would allow him to be an excellent Anatomist, but I never heard of any that advanced his Therapeutic way. I knew several practitioners in London that would not have given 3 d. for one of his Bills; and that a man could hardly tell by one of his Bills what he did aime at."

At any rate Chauvois has done a splendid job and the book—an example of fine biographical style—gives us a vivid impression of Harvey and his times and at the end is put down with regret.

A. L. BLOOMFIELD, M.D.

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SCIENCE LOOKS AT SMOKING—A New Inquiry Into the Effects of Smoking on Your Health—Eric Northrup—Introduction by Dr. Harry S. N. Greene, Chairman Department of Pathology, Yale University. Coward-McCann, Inc., 210 Madison Avenue, New York 16, N. Y., 1957. 190 pages, \$3.00.

The relationship between chronic cigarette smoking and lung cancer in males continues to be a topic discussed more with emotion than with scientific detachment. While the author makes a valiant attempt to remain detached, one can detect emotional overtones, especially in quotations from the entertaining introduction written by the normally quite detached Professor Greene, chairman of the department of pathology at Yale University.

After this not inconsiderable introduction, in which Doctor Greene emphasizes the well-known fact that he has been able to produce experimental carcinoma in animals with many standard carcinogens such as coal tar and dibenzanthracene, but never with tobacco smoke, there are a series of nine chapters. These range from the wisdom or otherwise of smoking, facts pertinent to lung cancer, coronary disease, animal research and "The Real Work To Be Done."

The author points out that there is no evidence that oral cancer has shown an increase parallel to the growing use of tobacco in the last 25 years, and that there are too many

paradoxes in the prevalence of lung cancer in different United States cities, and in different countries throughout the world, to permit a simple linkage with cigarette smoking. For example, in the ten large United States cities examined some years ago by the U. S. Public Health service, the prevalence of primary bronchial cancer in males varied by a factor of over 500 per cent. At time of writing this review, the prevalence of primary bronchial cancer in British males is twice that of United States males, and yet the amount of cigarette smoking per capita is considerably less in Great Britain.

The fact that primary bronchial cancer has not increased proportionately in females, despite much cigarette smoking in the fair sex in recent years, is also alluded to. The striking experience with newcomers to New Zealand is given due mention.

It is mentioned that the death rate in the United States today is about 26,000 per annum (not the 400,000 adumbrated by Doctor Ochsner in his book a couple of years ago).

The paradox in the coronary mortality matter is also discussed. The British investigators find a small increase in coronary mortality amongst heavy smokers, while the American investigators find a large increase. The number of authenticated deaths in either series of cases is of course relatively small.

The author emphasizes the importance of continued research into the carcinogenic factor in cigarette tobacco, if any, and the need for its elimination. He quotes Russ, the British cancer researcher, who observed that of the three common smoking habits throughout the world (tobacco, opium and hemp), there is little doubt that tobacco is the least evil. Used in moderation, it provides solace and some modicum of tranquility.

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PERIPHERAL CIRCULATION IN HEALTH AND DISEASE—Walter Redisch, M.D., F.A.C.P., Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine, New York University; and Francisco F. Tangco, M.D., B.S., Assistant Professor of Medicine, University of the Philippines Medical School, Manila; with a special section by R. L. deC. H. Saunders, M.D., F.R.S.E., Professor and Head of the Department of Anatomy, Dalhousie University Medical School, Halifax, Nova Scotia. Grune & Stratton, New York, 1957. 154 pages, \$7.75.

This is an interesting monograph, but is definitely for the specialist in peripheral vascular disease. It is aimed at a physiological understanding of peripheral vascular disease. The first part of the book deals with a detailed description of the anatomy and physiology of the peripheral vascular bed. Pathologic alterations are then discussed. The physiologic adjustments in flow are elaborated in detail and mechanisms of reactivity of the peripheral vessels are detailed. The section on therapy is brief and not too good. This book is not for the clinician, but is for the research worker in the field of peripheral vascular disease.

VICTOR RICHARDS, M.D.